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He Tells Nothing but Asks a Blank Conveyance of Powers.

The mystical address delivered to the Sixty-fourth Congress yesterday throws no light on the President's plans for the protection of American commerce or for the preservation of the nation's honor, now attacked, insulted and outraged by Germany's acts on the high seas.

The President's communication does not enable us to know that he has definite plans.

It does not even enable us to know that he has a definite intention to form plans and put them into effect.

It contains no specific recommendation on which the Sixty-fourth Congress can properly act.

What the President does after nearly four weeks of watchful waiting since he severed diplomatic relations with Germany is to go to a Congress which is in a few days to die the natural death of time limit and ask it to delegate to him in a general way broad powers which he says he possesses already "by implication"—whatever that may mean—but which it may become the constitutional duty of the next Congress, not this, to exercise in the event of possible occurrences after next Sunday.

That is to say, the President asks the expiring Congress to vote to him legislative functions admittedly belonging to the successor of this Sixty-fourth Congress, the Sixty-fifth; and this not because anything has happened between February 3 and yesterday to make the application urgent, but simply in order to spare himself the political inconvenience of applying later on to a Congress of a changed complexion.

The confusion of mind produced by this bewildering and unnecessary deference is increased when we find Mr. Wilson asking of the Sixty-fourth Congress a delegation to himself of the constitutional powers of the Sixty-fifth on the ground of his belief that the people will trust him to exercise these delegated powers of the legislature with both judgment and prudent restraint!

And to add still further to the topsyturveness of the proceeding, we find Mr. Wilson attributing cowardice and indecision to the ship owners and ship managers who have been imploring him for nearly a month to give them arms or convoy or at least assurance of Government protection in order that they might send forth their vessels in spite of the German blockade. So many of our ships, the President now says, "are timorously keeping to their home ports."

One thing is correctly stated by Mr. Wilson in this singularly mystical and metaphysical document: The authority and power of Congress will be behind him in whatever it may become necessary for him to do. He may be sure of that. Congress will be behind him whenever he moves for the assertion of the nation's rights and the maintenance of the honor of the flag. But in order that Congress and the nation may be behind him it is necessary that he shall move forward, not backward; and that Congress and the people shall know that he intends to move, and how.

His address affords no satisfactory information on these points. Its muddle of postponements and sentimentalities merely affords additional reason why at this time no extraordinary powers should be transferred in blank.

Sinking of the Liner Laconia.

It is to be noted that the Laconia, an 18,000 ton Cunarder, was torpedoed without warning at 10 o'clock at night. The Lusitania, which met her fate in the same waters off the Irish coast, went down in broad daylight. The new moon must have been below the horizon when the Laconia was struck, evidently at close range. Night sinkings, then, are not to be uncommon in the "barred zone." It adds to frightfulness to launch the bolt in the dark obscure. Passengers and crew must stay up if they would be ready to go overboard at any hour of the night.

The Laconia, like every British liner that leaves the port of New York, carried Americans on her passenger list. Until the last official return it is not known whether another "overt act" has been committed. We do know that Captain Irvine was fully prepared for what happened. Discipline must have been excellent. The first dispatch announced 278 persons

saved out of a total of 291, of whom 216 were officers and crew.

With her bars of silver, cotton, castings, wheat, provisions and war material, the big Laconia was a great prize for the Germans, although she lies fathoms deep at the bottom of the sea. One would like to know what her speed was when the torpedo pierced her hull. No ship, however fast, seems to be safe in the "barred zone" day or night, and the "overt act" is bound to be repeated over and over again.

The Next Speaker.

That Committee of Twenty-three which is trying to devise a plan for Republican organization of the next House must first invent some method of getting rid of their old Mann of the Sea. With that burden on their backs they can never go far.

Most desirable is it that the Republicans should control the House organization, thus ousting Democratic pacifists from control of the Committee on Military and Naval Affairs, the chances are against such a happy outcome. With the two great party lines tied in the hands of five independents. To win three of these will be the study of the party whips from now to the time of organization. It is obvious that so far as desirable committee assignments are concerned one party is as able to bargain as the other. But the Democrats have the advantage of Administration influence behind them, and it is readily conceivable that a word of friendship from the White House may prove a potent argument with a hesitating independent.

Moreover, the Democrats offer as their candidate for Speaker in CHAIR CLARK a man who has the same talent for making friends that the probable Republican candidate, JAMES R. MANN, has for making enemies. Perhaps at heart there is not much difference between the two men in their international beliefs to-day. MANN has been outspoken in his hostility to the assertion of American rights or the maintenance of American dignity against Germany. The most that can be said for CLARK is that he has been silent. His attitude is not pleasing to the country. If he still cherishes hope of that eminence which was denied him by Woodrow Wilson's sudden rise he would advance it better by an expression of sturdy patriotism than by his present caution. But it is not to be denied that his present position satisfies his party in the House and that he will hold its undiminished support.

Nothing but the extreme rigor of party discipline can hold the Republican side solid for MANN. It is inconceivable that he can get any of the necessary independent votes.

The steering committee might as well face the fact that the nomination of MANN for Speaker will be for him an empty honor and for the party an assurance of defeat.

Potatoes and Rice.

The increased cost and scarcity of food have become a burning question, emphasized by the antics of anarchistic disturbers and perhaps fomented by well meaning but probably misinformed settlement workers.

Distressing as the privations necessitated by this emergency may be, they will not be an unmixt evil if the lessons accruing from them are learned by the working people whose ratio of food outlays to other family needs is far in excess of that of the better situated. When one inspects the butcher and grocer shops of the tenement sections one is inclined to agree with Professor MEXNER of Yale that "the workingman does not want proteid, leguminous food, milk, &c., to improve his vegetable diet; he wants simply meat, not because he needs it, but because it is a matter of pride to follow as best he can the other classes in his diet." Cooking in the average of these households is more atrocious even than the food selection.

It may therefore inure to the great advantage of the industrial classes and by example also to others to realize through that most instructive of all teachers, necessity, the little known value of rice and the overrated value of potatoes as food.

The potato has become a popular article of food despite the fact that its nutritive content is but 20 per cent. Being far more nutritious than other vegetables with which it has always been classified, and less bulky withal, it has naturally superseded rice.

Rice contains 88 per cent. of nutritive material, furnishing pound for pound four times the nutritive value of the potato. When the present cost of these articles of diet is compared it becomes evident that great economy must result from substitution of the former for the latter. The occasion is auspicious for this enforced economy, and it redounds to the credit of our authorities that they have secured an ample supply of rice to keep the wolf from the door. Not only does physiological chemistry demonstrate the superiority of rice as a food, but according to the Farmers Bulletin No. 417 of the Department of Agriculture the larger part of the human race subsists chiefly upon rice. Witness the feats of strength of the baggage porters of Constantinople and the feats of endurance of the Jirikiasha drawers in Japan. It must be borne in mind, however, that rice alone would be insufficient as an exclusive diet; these people eat dried fish, treacle and in many Oriental countries soy beans, &c. Indeed, this combination with the protein rich legumes makes rice a complete food. In the Southern States, we are informed, the working people were "before the war" fond of a dish called "hopping John" which consisted of steamed rice mixed with cow peas boiled previously with ba-

con. We commend this as a palatable, nutritive and economical dish.

Polished rice, like highly milled wheat flour, is inferior to the ordinary hulled rice except in appearance. The unpolished article is not only more nutritious but cheaper, for the scrapings issuing from the rice-polishing machine contain most of the fat and some of the protein and cellulose, besides that recently discovered element vitamins, the deprivation of which has produced beriberi. It is important, therefore, that the public be warned against highly polished rice as an exclusive diet.

The chief reason for unpopularity of rice in sections of this country other than the South is imperfect cooking and serving; rice being chiefly used with sugar or milk or as a pudding for dessert. In the South rice is used principally like bread or potatoes. We are informed by a Southern physician that he has eaten rice for dinner every day for sixty years without acquiring the slightest distaste for it. And he attributes this experience, which may be duplicated a hundred thousandfold, to the Southern mode of cooking. The latter resembles that of the Japanese, being a steaming rather than boiling process, each grain being separate, without sodden, mushy appearance or taste. A lump of butter or a little gravy, we are informed, makes rice cooked in this manner a palatable dish, eaten in lieu of bread or potatoes, and forms an excellent economical substitute for both. Rice with milk and sugar may be an agreeable dessert, but it is not sufficiently satisfying to be used as a daily dish. Bread prepared in the shape of a pudding would be equally repugnant as a daily dish, while in its dry state it is indispensable at every meal.

It is an excellent idea of the Department of Health to issue directions for preparing rice to the schools. It is to be hoped that these are obtained from some old Southern mammy or housewife who may speak with authority.

A German Retirement.

The advance of the British to occupy positions west of Bapaume which the Germans had abandoned is described as "the most notable movement that has taken place in the war since the autumn of the first year." A retreat is a retreat; nothing else can be made of it, but when the retirement is strategic language of extravagant elation seems out of place. Nevertheless the British artillery has scored an advantage in making the district west of the Amiens-Arras railway too hot for the enemy. Miraumont has fallen into General Haig's hands and that town is on the rails. Serre, also, a place five miles to the northwest, is worth the possession, being astride of an important highway.

When an army strong in artillery and numbers falls back at any point without a battle the inescapable conclusion is that it will select a better defensive position when it halts again. In this case the German withdrawal was ably executed, for the British did not know what was going on. Their patrols found empty trenches and could not get into touch with the enemy. Under cover of night and fog the Germans took up their new ground, strengthening no doubt the force at Bapaume. The British can hardly expect the evacuation of that stronghold. It lies fairly high, some 500 feet, and was General Haig's goal in the Somme offensive that began so long ago as July 1, 1916.

Bapaume is on a railway that runs from Achiet, eight miles northeast of Miraumont, to the Amiens-Arras line, due east twenty miles to Marconville. Bapaume is, besides, the meeting place of four great highways coming from the north, east, south and west. That the Germans will give it up without a struggle is too improbable to consider. The highway running slightly east of south goes to Peronne, fifteen miles away.

Possession of both Bapaume and Peronne, the latter also a railway and crossroads town, would be a great advantage for the Allies, and at last they would be fairly on the way to Mons and Maubeuge of painful memory. They will have to deal, however, not only with the entrenched Germans but with the rains and mud of opening spring. Therefore their progress is likely to be slow, toilsome and marked with appalling sacrifices of gallant troops.

Frees Persia From German Influence.

In reply to Lord Bryce's inquiry regarding conditions in Persia Lord Curzon described the march of a British force under Sir PENEY SYKES from Bandar Abbas, on the Strait of Ormuz, northward through Isfahan to Teheran, the Persian capital. This march of a thousand miles through a rough, almost trackless land was one of the remarkable military achievements of the war in the East and a masterpiece of great strategic value.

Persia is the connecting link between the British and Russian empires, a cross road between Europe and the great unknown Central Asia and between Russia and the Persian Gulf. It was one of the goals of the Kaiser's Eastern ambition, a treasury to be unlocked by the Bagdad Railway. Through Turkey's aid he saw in the utter weakness of Persia and the questionable allegiance of the native rulers of the buffer States of Afghanistan and Baluchistan to England an opportunity to strike at India. To weaken the British prestige in the East and to prepare the way for the German triumph was the aim of the Teutonic propaganda among the Moslems which began with the memorable address of the Kaiser at the time of his entry into Jerusalem.

German consuls and agents worked with great address and were ably

seconded by Turks sent from Constantinople. From Kermanshah their influence extended along western Persia. They took possession of Isfahan, occupied Shiraz, imprisoning the British Consul there, negotiated alliance with tribes around the head of the Persian Gulf and were planning the capture of Teheran. The British occupation of the Mesopotamian valley and the Russian advance into Armenia halted the Teutonic progress, but they did not entirely remove its peril.

One of the results of the German effort to control Persia was the reestablishment by the British and Russians of their former zones of influence. One of the obligations assumed by Great Britain was the restoration of peace in southern Persia and the formation of a military police for the country under the command of British officers who had seen service in India. Sir PENEY SYKES accomplished this and at the same time made his remarkable march through the heart of the land. He returns Persia to Russia and Great Britain and by thus strengthening their control of Central Asia halts the Teutonic advance in the East.

"Relative Safety."

The eight Dutch ships which on February 22 sailed from Falmouth for their own country put to sea under a German promise of "relative safety." One of them struck a mine and seven were torpedoed by the Kaiser's young men in the submarine service.

Assuming that the mine which damaged one of the ships was planted by Great Britain, only seven of the ships were attacked by German raiders. Hence it is plain that "relative safety" means that only seven-eighths of a fleet shall be destroyed.

Had the Dutchmen waited until March 17 they might have sailed under the protection of St. Patrick and a Teutonic pledge of "complete safety." What the eminent Christian might have done for them is beyond speculation; we only know that he was bitterly opposed to snakes, and consequently would have exercised all his powers in behalf of the Hollanders; but if "relative safety" means the destruction of seven-eighths of a fleet, we are justified in believing that "complete safety" would have permitted at least 25 per cent. of the ships to finish their Kulturually chartered voyage.

Is it "timidity" that keeps a man with a lighted candle in his hand out of a gas filled cellar?

There are 30,000 mentally defective persons in the State, of whom only 6,749 are in asylums or other institutions. Report of the State Board of Charities.

Those who are at large make so much noise that many persons have thought their number much higher.

By polling a number of conspicuous experts on the question "Is it ever right to lie?" a New York minister has learned that although it may not be right it is not unfashionable.

The German Crown Prince admires the military qualities of the French, but says their trenches are filthy.—From an interview with the Prince.

Very messy about Verdun, eh?

I hate romance that is spurious, unselfish, self-deceiving.—From a sermon preached on Sunday.

Why limit it to romance?

Are the eminent philosophers of the East Side who to-day demand that the Government shall fix prices for food products the same who have enrolled to fight the death against compulsory arbitration?

It comes hard for some persons to acknowledge that citizenship in a republic carries with it responsibilities as well as immunities.

Apparently some Republican Representatives are willing to vote for MANN for Speaker of the House on the theory that he can do less harm in the chair than he could on the floor.

The Hon. JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS of Mississippi rejoices because he is not President of the United States, and a unanimous nation shares his joy.

An arrangement has been made under which the shop originally established in the Municipal Building for the convenience of municipal civil service employees in making an experiment in cooperative purchasing will be displaced by another, in which the city will not be a contributor of rent, light and heat. Here the enterprise will have an opportunity to prove itself on its merits, and free from the restraints now put on it, develop its service in accordance with the design of its promoters.

U-boats cut off shamrock supply.—Newspaper headline.

The overt act?

Dollar bill, now uprisings a rude and licentious press on the ground that it tries to put the President "in the attitude of desiring to enter this war." Colonel BRENNING must read newspapers more else sees; the last charge that will be brought against President Wilson is that he strove for carnage.

It is all very well to commend rice as a substitute for potatoes, but who will accept it in place of the fragrant onion? As well present to a lady a clove of garlic when she longs for a bouquet of sweet peas.

Police say he stole \$40,000 to keep two wives.—Newspaper headline.

The high cost of loving.

The Call in Wyoming.

From the Cody Enterprise.

Before the coming of spring our armies will be marching across flaming Europe, to lend their aid in the name of justice along the French frontier. In the hell of hate where millions struggle now. Over the scarred and hideous battlefields, in slimy trenches, on blood stained plains and lofty mountain heights the Stars and Stripes will float to cheer us to victory, and cast its peaceful shadow on the unknown graves in that foreign land where many of our countrymen will rest. This war will take a toll of blood from nearly every town within our borders. Daniel Webster said: "Let our object be our country, our whole country and nothing but our country." Our country's call for help will soon ring from sea to sea. How will Cody answer?

WHO WISHES WEATHER?

Large and Varied Offering by Missouri's Most Special Seer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—The drought which began in semi-arid localities will gradually extend. It is caused by Saturn and Neptune forcing the earth against the sun's repelling force from January 26 to April 24, when the planet Mercury will repel the earth outward from the sun and cause the general spring rains to increase about April 23.

The lunar, planetary and stellar conjunctions will cause cool and cold changes of weather about March 1, 3, 5 or 6, 9 or 10, 11, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26 and 28 or 29, 30 or 31; but in some places some of these cold spells will begin a day earlier and some a day later than the date named. From February 17 to April 20 and especially between the cool spells the weather will be unusually warm for that season of the year. Where showers or rains occur they will be of the warm type, such as a rule. But these conjunctions will not force the earth out from the sun and against the repelling forces of Saturn and Neptune to an extent sufficient to cause the needed amount of atmospheric contraction and rain, until Mercury forces the earth out from the sun and against the repelling forces of Saturn and Neptune in most localities about April 23.

If parts of Rumania, Turkey and some of the semi-arid districts of our Southwestern and Western States plough up their winter wheat to plant cotton and corn they can save such wheat fields as can hold out against the drought until the middle of June, and then plant corn. There may be frost in a few places about April 25 or 26 or 28 or 30 or 31 and even as late as May 15 or 16; yet from April 23 to September 6 will be a good season for agricultural growth.

D. A. N. GROVER.
KANSAS CITY, Mo., February 24.

BIRD KILLING CATS.

Probably the Worst Offender Is the Pet of the Householder.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—In your editorial article, "The Unlicensed Cat," you say: "The bills before various legislatures at this time asking to license pussy are merely aimed at the house cats."

There is here one of these little duties in fur that is not a rover. Surely not the pet and pampered disease breeding child's playmate; for there is no worse rover and destroyer of garden song birds than this very house pet.

It is more of a menace than the stray cat because of the protection given it and its being permitted to climb trees and kill birds at its pleasure. I am not mistaken. Dr. Hornaday found that many of the cats that were destroying birds in Bronx Park were pet cats.

It is one of the strangest things of life that people who belong to humane societies and are properly proud of their activities in helping out our birds, cats, horses and other animals will permit their pet cats to kill a mother bird and leave the little ones to starve and say, "It is instinct."

I am in sympathy with the licensing of cats; but I fear that until people learn through cultivation to love the beautiful coloring of our birds, take delight in their songs and appreciate the charm they lend to nature and see their practical value in destroying insects we shall not accomplish much.

JAMES D. DEWELL, JR.
NEW HAVEN, Conn., February 25.

AWFUL CONSEQUENCES.

England Indicts an Outrage on the Leather Trade.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: Under the heading "Direct Descendants of Washington Saw Parade" the Florida Times-Union says: "One of the features of the parade yesterday in honor of the anniversary of George Washington was the fact that Mrs. E. P. Clay and young E. P. Clay, Jr., were present in the city; direct descendants of the Father of His Country."

In honor of the discovery of the first direct descendants of the children of Father of His Country I offer the following lyric tribute:

If Washington's spirit could peep from the sky
By permission of Peter the Prime,
And view his descendants, he'd surely say,
It is Florida's wonderful climate!

The first in his country we only have known
In marble or bronze, but they say
In Florida's climate is everything grown,
And they've now reproduced him in Clay!

J. K. HAND,
PALATKA, Fla., February 24.

AMERICAN LIFE AT SEA.

As Commander in Chief the President May Afford Requisite Protection.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: How is it that the President had to go before Congress to ask for power to protect Americans on the high seas? Has he not always had this power as Commander in Chief of the army and navy?

I have always been under the impression that the President not only always had this power but that it was his bounden duty to exercise it.

NEW YORK, February 26. F. S.

Thomas McKean's Daughter.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: In the SUN of Friday morning, February 23, I notice an article under the heading "Madison Letters to Go to Auction." In this article you refer to letters written by "Miss Sadie McKean." The name should be McKean, not McKean, as she was the daughter of Thomas McKean, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and of whom I am a direct descendant.

ANNA MCKEAN DEAN,
BROOKLYN, February 26.

Appeal to Efficiency for Mercy?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: I grieve me sorely to read that the American Line ship, the Savannah, is to be sent on a voyage to New Zealand.

Why not exhaust all means to keep the seas open before doing anything so drastic?

I would suggest trying the right of petition.

A monster petition to the Kaiser, headed by our brave and noble President, might produce the proper result.

Is it not worth trying?
SARATOGA SPRINGS, February 25. H. B. R.

Unnatural.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: It is as plain as the nose on your face. The over-tact of the President causes him to wait for the next act of the Kaiser.

THANK A. EGAN,
MORRIS HEIGHTS, February 26.

War in a Tennessee Peace Meeting.

From the Giles County Record.

War broke out at the peace meeting at the Princeton Hotel in Nashville Sunday. A great crowd was divided and narrowly missed a riot. The motion finally carried favoring a referendum to the people as to whether it shall be war.

Major Stanton led the pacifists, while Jeff McKean, Judge B. D. Bell and General Moore gallantly shouted for war. The audience roared and many of the converts-to-be had occasion to refer to the "converting" of McKean.

The language did not permit of the precise rendering, so the phrase was turned by the interpreter into the beautiful old hat which will never wear out.

The Eskimo's "Crown of Glory."

From the London Observer.

A correspondent sends me another story of the difficulties attending the translation of Biblical metaphors into the Eskimo language. "A missionary talking to his converts-to-be had occasion to refer to the 'converting' of glory." The language did not permit of the precise rendering, so the phrase was turned by the interpreter into the beautiful old hat which will never wear out.

Teaching the Young Idea to Shoot in Our Insular Possession.

School Notes from Guam News.

We are studying the story of the discovery of America and are wrestling with the names of kings of long ago, such as Klu-mu-Ateh, Phih-hotep, Senneche-ryk, Anshur-bani-pai and similar names.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

Benevolence Will Find a Great Deal of Suffering Here to Relieve.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: The high cost of living is one of the most important questions of the hour. A cry of resentment and protest has come from the throats of the struggling multitude, and who can say that their grievance should not have the careful consideration of the proper authorities? That such conditions as we see exist in the United States, the land famed for its enormous food production, is peculiar to say the least.

Our benevolent charity workers are not slow to send their donations to the other side, showing their sympathy for human suffering in a generous spirit. This is all very well, but I would say with entire frankness that there is a big opportunity for charity work right here in America among the population that is so much affected by the high price of food.

JOHN J. MADHAN,
NEW YORK, February 25.

FALSTAFF ON HONOR.

Its Vagueness Better Expressed by the Fat Knight Than by Mr. Muzey.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: I find in THE SUN of February 23 the following sentiments of Professor Henry R. Muzey of Columbia University:

The loss of some hundreds of American lives is not worth going to war for. The loss of those lives is not to be compared with the loss we should suffer if we went to war. We are asked to fight for honor, a vague something we do not understand.

I should be sorry to accuse Dr. Muzey of plagiarism and doubt not that the resemblance is unintentional, but the sentiment about "honor" was written by Shakespeare 300 years ago and put in the mouth of Falstaff:

Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how! honour prick me off when I come on? How then? Can honour be leaped upon as a clown can a horse? No, it cannot. It is not to be won by a trick. It is not to be won by a trick. It is not to be won by a trick.

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